Impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) on Household Welfare in Cachar District of Assam

This paper investigates into the impact of MGNREGS on the welfare of beneficiaries in terms of Calorie intake based on a field survey of 320 households of which 240 households are households completing 100 days of employment and the remaining are households completing less than 50 days of employment during the period 2007-08 to 2009-10 in Cachar district of Assam. The results of the study show that NREGS has significant impact on calorie intake of households getting employment under NREGS. Based on the findings with regard to the impact of NREGS on the welfare of NREGS beneficiaries by applying multiple regression models of calorie intake, the study concludes that given proper implementation of the programme, it can have positive impact on household welfare.

**Keywords**: Calorie, MGNREGS, household welfare and regression.

**DR. MINHAJ UDDIN BARBHUIYA**

**Introduction**:

The government intervention in labour market as an employer of last resort (ELR) in India has been taking place for many years. Beginning with Rural Works Programme in 1961, the government has practised a large number of employment generation programmes, namely the Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE) from 1971-1974, Food for Work Programme (FFP) from 1977-1980, National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) from 1980-1989, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) from 1983-1989, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) from 1989-1999 and so on.

However, despite the efforts to improve livelihood security to the poor people, the unemployment and poverty are extremely high and are the most burning problems of the country today. The government has now changed its wage employment policy from self-targeting employment programme to universal programme. As a result, the government of India passed the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) on 7th September 2005. After introducing the NREGA, India became the first country in the world to ensure legal guarantee of work. The state government implements the NREGA as per the provisions laid down in the Act and at the state level with the nomenclature Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

Thus, MGNREGS is the product of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act commonly known as NAREGA passed by the Indian parliament in September 2005. It guarantees right based wage employment of at least 100 days in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work (Ministry of Rural Development, 2008). While providing income support when other works are scarce in rural areas through wage employment, the flagship scheme of the government of India promises creation of durable assets and reduction in out migration.

**Objective of the Study**:

The objective of the study is to examine the socio-economic impact of MGNREGS in Cachar District of Assam.

**Methodology**:

**Data Sources**:

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Information relating to number of households who completed less than 50 days of employment and number of households who have completed 100 days of employment since its inception in Cachar have been collected from secondary sources. The reference period is 2007-08 to 2009-10.

**Sampling Design**:

The study covered 5% of poor households who have completed 100 days of employment between 2007-08 and 2009-10. Thus, Sample size for this group in the study is 240. In order to know the impact of the scheme on welfare of households getting 100 days of work, another 80 households completing less than 50 days of employment (control group) were selected randomly taking 3:1 as the ratio of 100 days completing...
households to non-100 days completing households.

Methods and Tools:

In order to analyse impact of MGNREGS on household welfare, daily quantity of consumption of the essential commodities—rice, dal, potatoes, vegetables, spinach, fish etc. were collected from both the treatment group (households completing 100 days) and the control group (completing less than 50 days of employment) by applying recall method. Then based on the Standard Indian Calorie Chart, the calorie intake has been calculated by multiplying calorie per 100 gram of each of the commodities with quantity consumed. In order to analyse the impact of MGNREGS, we applied multiple regression for the two groups of households separately taking per capita calorie intake as the dependent variable and per capita income, household size, education, migration and loan outstanding as the explanatory variables.

Findings and Discussions:

As the table shows, the unstandardised coefficients on per capita income are positive and significant for both the two groups—households completing 100 days of employment and households getting less than 50 days of employment under study but the coefficient for MGNREGS beneficiaries who completed 100 days of employment is higher and more significant as compared to households who completed less than 50 days of employment implying that if income increases by a rupee, the households getting more days of employment consume more than the households getting lesser days of employment. This indicates that the MGNREGS income has been an effective means in enhancing the calorie intake of the poor people and thus their ultimate welfare. This has also, an implication that the households who completed 100 days find no alternative employment other than MGNREGS during the non-agricultural period and these households, thus, have utilised the whole MGNREGS year as subsidiary occupation when it is scarce for them. It is further observed that coefficients on household size, migration and loan are negative for both the groups. The signs of these estimates are correct on theoretical grounds implying that there is an inverse relationship between calorie intake and these variables. On the other hand, education has been found to be positively correlated with calorie intake for the two groups under study indicating that education has a positive impact on the enhancement of the per capita calorie intake in a poor family. However, the calorie intake is more sensitive to family size, education and loan in case of households who completed 100 days of employment where as the households who completed less than 50 days of employment have higher coefficients on migration than households who completed 100 days of employment.

It is further observed from the table that the value of f is higher (0.67) for households getting 100 days of employment implying that the variables of income, family size, education, migration and loan altogether explain more variation (67%) in calorie intake for such households as compared to households getting less than 50 days of employment (51%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient for households getting employment of 100 days &amp; more</th>
<th>Coefficient for households getting less than 50 days of employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>72.3 (0.484)</td>
<td>18.16 (.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita income</td>
<td>29.41* (0.00)</td>
<td>14.28*** (0.018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household size</td>
<td>-68.82* (0.01)</td>
<td>-2.3 (0.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>97.7* (0.003)</td>
<td>47.95 (0.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration</td>
<td>-145.62 (0.23)</td>
<td>-309.06* (0.003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan</td>
<td>0.06 (0.17)</td>
<td>-0.005 (0.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculated from Primary Data.
Notes: Figures in parentheses are p values, *significant at 1% (p<0.01); ** significant at 5% (p<0.05); *** significant at 10% (p<0.1).

Conclusions:

The findings based on econometric models made on the objective and hypothesis set for the study confirm that those who get more work under MNREGS become better off than those who get lesser works. This has also an implication that the households who completed 100 days find no alternative employment other than MGNREGS during the non-agricultural period and these households, thus, have utilised the whole MGNREGS year as subsidiary occupation when it is scarce for them. The MGNREGS income is thus an effective means in enhancing the calorie intake of the poor people and thus their ultimate welfare. So, according to our analysis, MGNREGS results in improvement of welfare of people who participates and get more works in the scheme. This has an implication that govt. as an employer of last resort through employment guarantee scheme like MGNREGS can lessen rural poverty and seasonal unemployment.

References:

6. Patient India (n.d.), “Calorie Count in Indian Food Items”.
That Thou Art-Advaitic Interpretation

The first way of interpretation is called Jahallakshana. In Jahallakshana, we are totally giving up the literary meaning of a word and replace it with the suggestive meaning. For example the statement 'The house is in Ganges'. If we take the literary meaning of this statement, it means that the house is literally in Ganges, which is absurd. Hence in order to overcome this absurdity, suggestive meaning is taken. In order to make the statement meaningful the word 'in' is replaced by 'near', which gives the meaning that the house is near Ganges.

**Dr.K.N.Basavaraju**

Shankara in his advaitic system refers to three means of knowledge namely perception, inference and verbal testimony. Later writers add to these, three other pramanas namely comparison, implication and negation. The present paper proposes to discuss the Advaitic view on verbal testimony or sabda or Shruti, especially its interpretation of Mahavakya namely Tattvamasi.

The Mimamsaka holds the view that the Veda is Apaurusheya. This means that he considers the scriptures as produced by no author and as being eternal. The Nyaya-Vaisesika on the other hand regards Isvara as the author of the Veda. The position of the Advaitin is midway between the two. Like Mimamsaka but unlike the Nyaya-Vaisesika, he admits that the Veda is Apaurusheya. But he redefines that the Veda is produced at the beginning of each kalpa by Iswara that He cannot interfere either with its content or with the order of its words. At the beginning of each kalpa or cosmic projection Isvara repeats the Veda anew but precisely as it was in the previous kalpas. In this sense also the Veda is eternal. At the time of cosmic dissolution it is withdrawn into Iswara but only to be produced again at the beginning of the next cosmic projection.

**Is Scriptural testimony real or unreal? :**

Whether sabda pramana is real or unreal is a question of great importance in the context of Advaita philosophy. The distinctive feature of the Advaita Vedanta is its non-dualistic conception of reality. Its most important metaphysical tenet is its conception of Brahman as the Absolute Reality which is without a second. The Naiyayika points out the difficulties involved in this metaphysical position. If we accept the validity of sabda pramana, Brahman ceases to be non-dual because along with Brahman, we are accepting another entity, namely sabda. Now, if on the other hand sabda pramana is unreal then the question arises as to how can we get the knowledge of the real, viz Brahman, with the help of a pramana which is unreal? Can an unreal Pramana lead to the knowledge of real Brahman? In other words if the scripture is illusory, how can it be claimed as the ultimate authority in spiritual matters?

Advaitin replies that from the highest ontological standpoint all pramanas, inclusive of the Veda, are meaningless. In fact, from the highest ontological standpoint there is no distinction between the means of knowledge, the object of knowledge and the knowing person. This distinction is due to superimposition or Adhyasa that is rooted in ignorance or Avidya. "All our experience starts in this error which identifies the Self with the body, senses, etc. All cognitive acts presuppose this kind of false identification, for without it the pure Self can never be a knower, and without a knowing personality, the means of right knowledge cannot operate. Therefore the means of right knowledge and the scriptural texts belong to the sphere of ignorance (avidya)."

However Advaitin answers that although a pramana is illusory, it can yet reveal what is absolutely real. It signifies that a false means may lead to a true end. There are numerous instances in life that show that what is real can be revealed by what is not real. The roaring of a lion in a dream for example is not real, but it may wake the dreamer up to actual life. It is therefore possible that scripture, though relatively real, can yet reveal the Absolute. It should also be noted that since nothing except Brahman is absolutely real, nothing is also absolutely unreal. The scripture is not absolutely unreal like.
the sky-flower. Prior to the dawn of knowledge, the authority of the Veda stands unquestioned. It is only after the realization of the Ultimate Truth that its value becomes superfluous. The Vedas have the same utility to a realized soul as a reservoir does to a man, which exists by the side of an all-spreading flood of water.

**The truth revealed in the Veda is Brahman:**

According to the Purva Mimamsakas only the passages of the Vedas that are related to ritual actions (karma) have authority. The Mimamsaka therefore regards the texts dealing with the individual soul and Brahman as secondary. According to him texts dealing with the individual soul refer to the agent of ritualistic action (kartr) and those dealing with Brahman refer to the Deities to whom rituals are offered. Shankara however rejects this view. According to him the truth revealed in the Vedas is the fundamental unity of Being. Brahman is the main purport of all the Vedantic texts. Shankara says that the main purport of a treatise can be determined by applying following criteria:

(i) The beginning (upakrama) and the conclusion (upasamhara) of the treatise should be the same.

(ii) The topic under discussion should be repeated (abhaya) sufficiently in order to avoid digression.

(iii) The topic under discussion should be unique (apurvata) in that it should give us new information which is not given by any other sources.

(iv) It should specify the fruit (phala) of knowing the topic.

(v) It should glorify (arthavada) the greatness of the topic.

(vi) It should give a rational foundation (upapatti) to what it is propounding.

These six will help to arrive at the real purport of any work and it is on the basis of these criteria that Shankara concludes that Brahman is the main purport of shruti.

For example the Chandogya Upanishad begins “O good looking one, in the beginning there was Existence alone, one only, without a second” and ends with the statement, “That which is this subtle essence, all this has got That as Truth and That as the Self”. What is referred to in the beginning is the same as what is referred to in the end. Again the statement “That thou art” is frequently repeated, in which Brahman is referred to. Thirdly the uniqueness of the topic lies in the fact that the existence of Brahman cannot be known by any other pramana than sabda. The fruit of the topic is also mentioned viz, the attainment of liberation. The text also glorifies the topic in that Brahman is the origin, source of sustenance and dissolution of the manifold world. Reasoning has also been used in the scriptures to elucidate the point that by knowing Brahman one knows everything. Two examples are given in that by knowing earth, one knows all the objects made out of clay and by knowing gold, one knows all the ornaments made out of the substance gold. Thus, all the six criteria show, according to Samkara, that the main topic of the text is Brahman.

How to interpret the Advaitic Mahavakya ‘tat tvam asi’?

Thus, the truth revealed by the scriptures, according to the Advaitins, is the fundamental unity of Brahman and Atman. This is expressed in the great saying or Mahavakya namely ‘That thou art’ (tattvamasi).

Mahakavya is an important saying in Chandogya Upanishad. Now it needs to be understood how Shankara interprets it in his non-dualistic background.

Every word has two meanings namely literary meaning as we find it in the dictionary and suggestive or inner meaning. ‘Tat’ literally means ‘that’ which suggests ‘Brahman’; ‘tvam’ literally means, individual self or ‘you’; ‘asi’ means ‘are’. So what is said in the mahakavya is that the Brahman or the Supreme Self is identical with Atman or the individual self. Now how can the Supreme Self, which is omnipotent and omnipresent, become identical with the individual self which has limited knowledge and is limited to space and time? Therefore the question as to how ‘tat tvam asi’ is possible is to be logically corroborated. The question needs to be discussed in greater detail. When a statement becomes irrelevant in respect of its literary meaning, it needs to be interpreted in respect of suggestive or deeper meaning. According to Shankara there are three ways to arrive at the suggested meaning of a statement.

(a) The first way of interpretation is called Jahallakshana. In Jahallakshana, we are totally giving up the literary meaning of a word and replace it with the suggestive meaning. For example the statement ‘The house is in Ganges’. If we take the literary meaning of this statement, it means that the house is literally in Ganges, which is absurd. Hence in order to overcome this absurdity, suggestive meaning is taken. In order to make the statement meaningful the word ‘in’ is replaced by ‘near’, which gives the meaning that the house is near Ganges.

(b) The second way of interpretation is called ajahallaksana. Here we retain the literal meaning of the word but in order to make it relevant we add some more meaning. For example in the sentence “Protect the corn from crows”. In this statement it is intended that we have to protect the corn not only from crows but also from other birds and animals. It is only then the meaning of the statements is fully conveyed.

(c) The third way of interpretation is called Jahadajahallaksana. It represents a combination of the first two. Here we are neither giving up completely the literal meaning of the word as we do in jahallaksana nor are we retaining the literal meaning as we do in ajahallaksana. In jahadajahallaksana we give up a part of the literal meaning of the word give up the other part in order to make the statement meaningful. For example, the statement “This is the same person as I saw yesterday”. This is not a subject-predicate proposition. It is a proposition of identity in which the differences in time, place, hairstyle etc. are intended to be ignored and only essential identity should be taken up.

According to Advaitin ‘tat tvam asi’ should be interpreted in accordance with the third way
(jahadajahallaksana). That means the aspects responsible for difference between Brahman and Atman, should be rejected as secondary and the common features of both terms should be taken up. Pure existence (sat), pure consciousness (cit) and pure bliss (ananda) are the common features. Brahman and atman are only outwardly different, but inwardly they are identical. In short the difference between Brahman and Atman is only apparent and in essence they are identical in respect of Sat, Chit and Ananda.

**How to grasp the meaning of 'tat tvam asi'**

Among the old Indian schools mainly there are two different opinions concerning as to how the meaning of a statement is grasped. This divergence could be seen in the school of mimamsa. According to Prabhakara school of mimamsa we grasp the meaning of the whole statement simultaneously with the grasping of each word of statement. No additional effort is needed after the grasping of the meaning of the word in the statement, to understand the whole meaning of the statement. This view is called Anvitatbhidana vada.

Kumarila, however, does not accept this view. According to him after grasping the meaning of each word we need to combine meaningfully all the words to understand the entire statement, for which we need an additional effort. For example in Bana's Kadambari the first sentence itself is so long as it runs to seven pages. We need to separate the complicated words, recollect them, combine them into meaningful whole, which is a laborious task and involves an additional effort. Grasping the meaning of the sentence in such cases is not an easy task. It does not automatically lead to the understanding of the meaning of the whole sentence. This view of Kumarila is called Abhihitanvaya vada.

The Advaitins subscribe to the second theory. Moreover the Advaitins say that we can understand the meaning of the mahakavya only through a competent teacher who has experienced the meaning of the statement. We can understand the importance of the mahakavya by listening attentively to the words of the guru (sravana). The next step to be undergone is manana. This is reflecting over the teachings of the Guru with the help of logic. According to Shankara, knowledge is not possible without this manana or right thinking. In manana, we assume the opposite of Guru's teachings as true and find out its absurdity. Realizing the absurdity of the opposite of Guru's teaching leads one to conviction about truth.

There is another question as to whether the knowledge got from the guru is director indirect? Naiyayika holds the view that the knowledge coming from sravana is purely indirect. For example when one says that rose is red, it doesn't lead us to the direct experience of the rose. It may only give us a rough information about the rose. Therefore according to Naiyayika, sravana can only give us indirect knowledge of the object.

According to the Vedantins, however, this is true but not applicable to all the statements. It is only true of the empirical statements but even among them there are certain statements by listening which we get direct experience. For example the very utterance of the statement “You are the tenth man” leads one to the direct seeing of the tenth man whom other nine persons mistakenly were searching. In a group of ten persons every man counts the other nine, ignoring himself and an intelligent man who was watching the ignorance of these men, asks all of them to stand in a line and shows that all the tenth persons are present. In the same way the very listening of the great statement tattwamasi from a competent teacher leads a competent disciple to the direct experience of his pure self as identical with Brahman.

**References**

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Advaita Vedanta : A Birds Eye View

Advaitins admit the Samkhyan view that all knowledge is through Antahkarana vritti. They donot admit Alaukika pratyaksha of Nyaya. They are straight forward in their explanation of error. According to them, when a snake is seen in the rope snake example, we have got to admit the objective existence of snake. We can never perceive a thing if it is not there. Perception of nonexistence is virtually impossible. We perceive the snake even though others donot perceive it. Insofar as it is given to my perception it is real. Later on when we realize the actual presence of the rope, we do not refute our perception of the snake. Had we not seen the snake, there would have been the least possibility of our committing the error. Thus the fact of our seeing the snake is not denied even after our getting correct knowledge. Hence the snake which I saw must be real. But the kind of snake I see is peculiar and is created by maya or avidya.

Vedanta represents the final reaching of the Upanishads. It is also called also Uttar Mimamsa. Upanishads speak of Brahman both as Saguna and Nirguna. Similarly they speak of the manifold universe both as real and illusory. We can see both cosmic (Saprapancha) and acosmic (Nishprapancha) views of Brahman in the Upanishads. Similarly they speak of the individual self both as identical with and different from Brahman. Thus there seems to be an apparent contradiction in the Upanishads with regard to the nature of Brahman, jiva and the world and the relationship among them.

Hence later thinkers tried to resolve these apparent contradictions. For instance Badarayana attempted to do this in his famous Brahmasutra. It contains 555 sutras discussing the vedantic problems in aphoristic (sutras) form. However these sutras are so brief that we cannot understand them so easily. There are many sutras containing only one or two words. Thus the ambiguity, overprecision in the sutras led to ambiguity, and lent itself to several interpretations. Different thinkers began to interpret the sutras in different ways. Broadly there are three important interpretations to Brahma sutra namely by Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa who respectively represent the three schools of Vedanta namely Advaita, Vishistadvaita and Dvaita.

Upanishads, Brahma sutra and Bhagavadgita form the basis of the Vedanta school. These three texts are collectively called Prasthana Trayas (triple classics). Shankara wrote a long commentary on all the three prasthanas. Ramanuja however wrote commentaries only on Brahma sutra and Bhagavadgita. He did not write any commentary on the Upanishads. But his disciple Ranga Ramanuja did this work. Ramanuja however culled out certain statements from the Upanishads and expounded them from Vishistadvaitic standpoint. His work which compiles the important upanishadic statements with his own commentary added to them is called Vedartha Samgraha. Ramanuja's commentary on Brahma Sutra is called Sri Bhashya. Madhwa also wrote commentaries on all the three Prasthanas's (foundations) but his commentaries are brief. Though the three thinkers are not at variance with regard to Brahman's existence, they however are so with regard to its nature.

Advaita of Sri Shankara (7th A.D.) :

According to Sri Shankara, Brahman is attributeless (Nirguna). The concept of Saguna Brahman or Ishwara is postulated only for those who have lower level of comprehension (mandadhirakins). According to Shankara the doctrine of Nirguna Brahman alone is the final message of the Upanishads. Similarly Brahman and Jiva are one and the same, and they are not different.

Before Shankara there were many thinkers who wrote commentaries on Brahmasutra. Of these whom Shankara criticizes frequently in his works is Bhartrprapancha. We know Bhartrprapancha only through Shankara's works and his works are not available sofar. Bhartrprapancha's views were later accepted by Yadavaprakasha and Bhaskara of eleventh century A.D.

According to Bhartrprapancha, the variety is as much real as unity. That means Brahman is both one and many. The whole world of name and form (nama and rupa) exists in Brahman in a subtle form and it manifests into gross form.
during creation. Thus the world is an actual transformation of Brahman. However while transforming itself into the world, Brahman remains unchanged and does not lose its identity. This view is what is called Bhedabheda Vada. Similarly the individual soul is both identical with and different from Brahman. Further both knowledge (Jnana) and Action (karma) are supposed to be the means of salvation (moksha). The view is called Jnana karma samuchchaya Vada.

However the above view was not acceptable to Shankara. According to him Bhartprapancha was actually clothing the problem in the form of an answer. According to him to speak of Brahman both as one and many, and identical with and different from the individual soul at the same time is logically contradictory. Similarly both Jnana and Karma cease to be the means of Moksha simultaneously.

According to Shankara reality or Brahman is nondual. There is no other reality than Brahman (Ekam eva adhitaye). It is an entity which cannot be explained in terms of subject and predicate because it is beyond the distinction of both. It is neither a substance having any attribute nor an attribute of any other substance. Since Brahman has no quality it is not accessible to our mind and speech. Our mind can grasp and our speech can describe only such things which have attributes. Since Brahman is attributeless it is indescribable. What is not Brahman can be described and not what it is. Hence Upanishads speak of it in a negative way (Neti Neti).

In other words Brahman has no quality pertaining to the physical world. As Taittiriya Upanishad says it is pure Existence (sat), pure Consciousness (Jnana) and Infinite (Ananta). There is also another way of describing Brahman as Sat, Chit and Ananda. These are neither the qualities nor parts of Brahman. They constitute the essential nature (Svarupa lakshana) of Brahman. That means to speak of Brahman is to speak of it as Existence, Consciousness, Infinite and Bliss.

To understand the nature of the world, we have to acquaint ourselves with three terms in Shankara’s philosophy.

(a) Sat is the eternal existence transcending the barriers of three-fold time viz past, present and future. Our conception about it does not change because of its unchangeable nature. Only Brahman belongs to this category. Brahman is eternally existent and our conception of it does not undergo any change because of its immutable nature.

(b) Asat is eternal non-existence. It is not existent in the past, present and future. It is real only in speech but not in fact. Sky flower, hare’s horn and barren woman’s son can be cited as examples for Asat. Vidyaranya illustrates this point by referring to a story. A nurse tells a story to a boy about three handsome princes, of whom two were not born and the third did not exist even in the womb. Invested with virtues, it is said, they lived in a town which did not exist at all. (Vedanta Panchadashi 13-22 and 23).

(c) Sadasadvilakshana is different from Sat and Asat. It is neither eternal being nor eternal non-being. Physical world belongs to this category. The world is not sat for two reasons. Firstly, it undergoes change incessantly and is subject to destruction. Secondly, since it is ever changing, our knowledge of it undergoes also change. In other words our knowledge of the world is going to be sublated, cancelled or contradicted by the knowledge of Ultimate Realty. Nor the world is Asat because it is given to our experience and serves our practical purposes. Something which is given to experience cannot be dubbed as absolutely unreal. Thus the physical world is neither Sat nor Asat and it is something different (vilakshana) from Sat and Asat. Nor can it be both Sat and Asat, for that would be a logical contradiction. A thing cannot be both Sat and its opposite at the same time. Thus according to Shankara the world it neither Sat nor Asat and hence it is called Mithya. Mithya is not absolute unreality, but it is a reality only provisionally or temporarily. Shankara is more realistic than any other realist in accepting the reality of the world. But according to him reality of the world is only provisional. Since the world is inexplicable in terms of being and non-being, it is also called Anirvachaniya.

So long as we are in illusion, say the illusion of snake in rope, the so-called illusion is also real. Dream is real so long as we are in it. The moment we wake up we realize its falsity. Similarly the world is real so long as we experience or see it and it becomes unreal only when we realize the ultimate Reality.

Logically also, if Brahman is accepted as real, then the world must necessarily be unreal. Because while Brahman is nondual, consciousness and immutable, the world is pluralistic, inert and mutable. Two entities having opposite features cannot be real at the same time. Nor do they have causal relationship for the same reason. How can a thing give rise to another having opposite feature? Moreover causation implies change or transformation of cause into effect. A cause does not give rise to an effect unless it undergoes some sort of change in its inner nature. To say that Brahman is the cause of the world is to attribute change to it. Even if we say that Brahman retains its immutability while becoming the world, that would also be contradictory. Because the same thing cannot be both mutable and immutable. Thus Brahman logically ceases to be the cause of the world. It is beyond the relationship of cause and effect. Advaitins speak of Brahman as apparent cause of the manifold universe and not the real one. This view of causation is called Brahma Vivarta Vada in Advaita and is opposed to Ramanuja’s Brahma parinama Vada.

**Status of Jiva**:

Now, if physical universe is mithya, then what is the ontological status of the jiva in the world? Is it real or illusory? According to Advaita even jiva is an illusion but not in the sense of the physical world. There are two types of illusions. In case of the world, we deny the very existence of the illusory object with the dawn of knowledge. In the rope-snake example when we see the rope, the entire snake vanishes from our vision. In the second case we deny only
certain aspects which are wrongly attributed to an object. For instance in the yellow conch example we deny only yellowness which is wrongly ascribed to the conch and not the very conch. Actually yellowness belongs to our eyes (which are jaundiced) through which we perceive the conch and not to the conch. The illusoriness of jiva is of second type. Here it is not the entire Jiva but only certain aspects like body, vital air, (prana) sense organs and mind that are unreal. These aspects are called upadhis (adjuncts) and they are wrongly superimposed upon the pure self. This superimposition of the adjuncts upon the pure self is what is called Adhyasa. According to Shankara it is due to Adhyasa one sees manyness in the place of nondual reality. Difference in the non dual soul is due to Adhyasa. According to Shankara jiva and Brahman are essentially identical. Shankara gives his own criterion of reality. According to him that which is not and cannot be sublated by the knowledge of any other thing is real. Or that about which our knowledge does not alter is real. Since self is an entity about which our knowledge does not alter, it is real. According to Shankara, knowledge of the self it indubitable. We can doubt anything in the universe but we can not doubt ourselves. Even if we deny ourselves we must at least be there to deny us. Since according to sruti self is not different from Brahman, and since self is indubitable, Brahman is also indubitable.

Maya: 

According to Advata, Maya or nescience is responsible for the appearance of this manifold universe. This nescience is said to have two fold function. One is negative in that it conceals the reality, the other function is positive in that it projects the unreality in the place of reality. By virtue of this we not only not see what is there but see what is not there. We donot see the non dual Brahman, but see the pluralistic universe. Thus maya has two fold potency viz Avarana Shakti and Vikshepa Shakti.

Nescience operates in all the states of human experience namely waking, dream and deep sleep. Even though Maya operates in waking state what we see in it has got empirical value (Vyavaharika Satya). The things perceived in it are more enduring that than perceived in dream (pratibhasika satya). In deep sleep nescience being in a seed form is at partial work. There it only conceals the reality and does not project any other thing in its place. Hence nothing is experienced in that state.

Later Advaitins identity Maya with Prakriti of Samkhya. However there are certain differences between the two. According to Samkhya, Prakriti is real sharing the same ontological status with Purusha. However Maya in Advaita is neither real nor unreal. It is inexplicable (Anirvachanaya) in terms of being and nonbeing. Secondly according to Samkhya Prakriti has no other support. It is self sufficient. It is capable of manifesting the universe without the help of any external principle. But according to Advaita Maya has a supreme substratum (Adhisthana). The world of course has its source in Maya and Maya in turn has its support in Brahman. But there is no other support for the Brahman which is self sufficient. Thirdly according to Samkhya with the dawn of supreme knowledge prakriti is not destroyed but continues to exist. Supreme knowledge is realization of oneself as different from prakriti. However according to Advaita with the dawn of knowledge Maya and its effect namely world vanish from our vision. However Samkhya and Advaita agree with two points. Firstly, both trace the pluralistic world to the source of prakriti. Secondly, according to both, the order in which prakriti evolves itself into the world is the same.

Saguna Brahman:

There is another speciality in later Advaita. It distinguishes Maya and Avidya and does not identify them as is done in the earlier Advaita. While Maya pertains to the cosmic level Avidya pertains to the individual level. Maya at the cosmic level is said to be an attribute of the Supreme. Brahman seen in association with magic adjunct is called God. He is also called saguna Brahman or Ishwara. In this level He assumes the function of creation, sustenance and destruction of the universe. When Shruti speaks of Brahman as the cause of the world it has either of these two implications. (a) It either implies that to Saguna Brahman as the creator or (b) Nirguna Brahman as the substratum (Adhisthana) of the pluralistic world. A substratum is that which does not undergo any change while appearing itself into some thingelse. A rope for example does not undergo any actual change while appearing as snake.

According to Advaita when compared to Brahman, God is also unreal. But its unreality is not like that of the world. Only the magic adjunct through which Brahman appears as world is unreal. According to Shankara God is a great magician who performs magic without himself being influenced by it. In this respect God is different from soul. The power of concealment (Avarana) of Maya does not affect God. Only the power of projection operates in Him. Hence there is no question of His not knowing His real nature. He is eternally aware not only of His non-dual nature but also of the falsity of His creation. Hence He is not perturbed by what happens in the universe. However in the case of soul both the powers of Maya operate and hence it knows neither its supreme nature nor the unreality of the world. Thus while God knows his Maya, jiva is ignorant of its ignorance. It does not know that it dose not know. However they are essentially one and the same having the same core of reality namely Brahman . Both are in essence pure consciousness. Essentially the consciousness is sakshi (witness) or Drig (perceiver). It is neither agent (kartr) nor enjoyer (Bhoktr) of action.

Epistemology:

Advaitins admit the Samkyhan view that all knowledge is through Antahkarana vritti. They donot admit Alaukika pratyaksha of Nyaya. They are straight forward in their explanation of error. According to them, when a snake is seen in the rope snake example, we have got to admit the objective existence of snake. We can never perceive a thing
if it is not there. Perception of nonexistence is virtually impossible. We perceive the snake even though others do not perceive it. Insofar as it is given to my perception it is real. Later on when we realize the actual presence of the rope, we do not refute our perception of the snake. Had we not seen the snake, there would have been the least possibility of our committing the error. Thus the fact of our seeing the snake is not denied even after our getting correct knowledge. Hence the snake which I saw must be real. But the kind of snake I see is peculiar and is created by Maya or avidya. It is not Atat because it is perceptible and whatever is perceptible must be real to some extent. Nor can it be sat because if it were so it would continue to exist at all times. This however is not the case. Whenever the right knowledge arises, the snake ceases the exist. The existence of the snake is cancelled, or sublated (badhita) by the knowledge of the rope. Thus error represents a confusion between different levels of reality. The snake which we see in the illusion (pratibhasika satya) is different from the one which we see in the empirical world (vyavaharika satya). The former is private where as latter is public.

Thus the object seen in the error can neither be said to be Sat nor Atat. It is different from being and non being and hence the name sadasadvilakshana as we have already noted. It is inexplicable in terms of being and non being and hence it is also called Anirvachaniya. Since the object of error is inexplicable, the Advaithic theory of error is called Anirvachaniya Khyati. The illory snake (mithya sarpa) is mistaken for genuine snake. This applies to the world also. The pratibhasika satya is mistaken for vyavaharika satya and the vyavaharika satya is mistaken for paramarthika satya. This kind of confusion is called Adhyasa and Adhyasa is characteristic of all types of error. Shankara defines Adhyasa as “Adhyaso nama Atasmin tad buddhih.” In Adhyasa we confuse Tat (that) for Atat (non that) and vice versa.

Thus there is an object corresponding to all knowledge either erroneous or true. Truth however does not lie in correspondence with the object, but it lies in non contradiction. True knowledge may have an objective counterpart, but its truth is not determined by this fact alone, but by its not being cancelled by any other knowledge (Abadhita).

Any knowledge in theory is contradictable. But there is one knowledge which cannot be denied and undeniable that is the knowledge of one's own self. Nobody can deny his existent. It is not only uncontradicted but it is uncontradictable. Therefore the self is the supreme Reality.

**Moksha:**

Hence man’s final goal is to realize his true self and the knowledge of this self is mukti. Mukti is not intellectual comprehension but the direct experience of the self. Moksha requires many spiritual preparations for its achievement. The two main things required for mukti are vairagya (detachment) and Jnana.

The self is attached to many worldly objects which do not form its essential nature. So it must get detached from these things. Man must cultivate detachment at two levels. In the first step the aspirant should perform his duty in a disinterested spirit. Even though karma (duty) is not the direct means of Moksha it can be an indirect means to achieve moksha. By performing Karma in a disinterested manner man can achieve mental purification (chitta shuddhi) which is essential for the attainment of Moksha.

It the second step the aspirant must develop four fold scheme of sadhana (a) Nityaanitya vastu viveka Discrimination between what is real and what is not real. (b) Ihamutra phalabhoga viragah- giving up the craving for objects of enjoyment here and hereafter. (c) Shamadi satka sampatti. (d) Mumukshutva A strong desire for the attainment of Moksha.

It is only after the cultivation of the above Sadhanas, the Sadhaka will be eligible to take to the path of Jnana. Jnana does not come to all and sundry. The aspirant should go to a teacher, listen to his teaching intensively and reflect over his teaching to get convinced about that and finally meditate upon what he listened from his Guru. Listening to the teaching of the Guru is Sravana. Reflecting over the teaching is called Manana. In Manana the theoretical teaching is transformed into conviction. Meditation of the teaching is called Nididhyasana. This will lead the aspirant to direct experience. This experience does not bring about any change in the Jiva. It only brings about a change in its conception about itself and not the thing as such.
Revelation and Reason : A Study

Advaita Vedanta, there is no contradiction between reason and revelation because both are intrinsically valid in their respective spheres. Reason enjoys sovereignty empirical field and Veda enjoys in its transempirical realm. If two pramanas are talking on the same object, only then there is the possibility of arising contradiction. But when spheres of reason and revelation are clearly demarcated, where is possibility of contradiction? (Anumanasya eva avishayaravat kutah anumana virodhah?) “When the object of Sruti is not the same as the object of inference, where then is the occasion for contradiction? A pramana has no authority either to establish or refute the truth of other.

Hence according to Nyaya Veda is extrinsically valid (Paratah Pramanya) being dependent upon God. But according to Advaita Veda is intrinsically valid not depending on others for its existence. It is self existent. God does not create Veda. He only issues the already existent Veda at the beginning of each world cycle. He is the first teacher of the Veda. The seers only received it thro hearing and passed it on from generation to generation. An Upanishad says, “so we have heard from our ancient seers”. Thus Veda is not connected with any person being written or spoken at any particular place and time. Samkara asks Naiyayika that if we are to accept Veda because of its omniscient creator, why do we not accept the works of other omniscients like Kanada, Kapila, Buddha etc? Are not the latter omniscients? Hence Vedas are impersonal (Aparaurushaya) according to Advaita. Except the point that Vedas relate only to duties and not to the facts all other arguments of Mimamsaka in favour of the validity of Vedas are acceptable to Advaita.

Sruti as a Pramana of Suprasensible reality :

If Sruti or revelation echoes the findings of the other ways of knowing it may be discarded. However if it gives new Knowledge (Anadhihata) which we cannot have through either perception or inference it can be accepted as a pramana. Also veda knowledge is uncontradictable (Abadita). Sureshwara in his Naishakarma-Siddhi points out four reasons for which a pramana may be discarded.

(i) If a pramana establishes a truth which is established by another pramana.
(ii) If it propounds the truth which is contradicted by another pramana.
(iii) If it gives ambiguous knowledge.
(iv) If it establishes nothing.

According to Nyaya Veda caanot be rejected for the first reason because it gives the knowledge which is unattainable through other means. Jaimini points out that Veda is the source of knowledge where perception and inference fail to be of assistance to us (Aprapte hi shastramarthavat). Also Veda

Introduction:

It is said that to hear is to believe. Of the numerous facts which man wants to know, it is only a small fraction that he can learn for himself. For the rest, he has to depend upon the testimony of others which comes to him through their words. So Shabda as a separate pramana communicating information to or enriching our own experience becomes a necessity. In other words shabda is a statement of a trustworthy person. The apprehension of the relation between the meanings of the words which are syntactically conjoined in a statement, constitutes the verbal cognition of the fact or truth communicated. This Pramana has two-fold capacity of communicating the truth. (i) It can communicate the facts of sensible universe. This is the Laukika Aptavachana which can be verified by other means of knowledge namely sense-perception. Since Laukika Aptavachana depends upon other means of knowledge for its validity it ceases to be intrinsically valid. (ii) Shabda Pramana has the capacity of enlightening us on supersensible truths also. This is called Alaukika Aptavachana. This cannot be verified by other ways of knowing and hence it is intrinsically valid.

Sruti inculcating the secondless ultimate truth (Aupanishadha Purusha or Brahma) constitutes Alaukika Aptavachana. It is the objective manifestation of intuitive experience of seers and so it is authoritative. It is said to be its own proof requiring no support from elsewhere (Pramanayam nirapeksham). The truth it embodies is eternal and universal. That is why Veda is called Eternal. Veda is not merely Shabda jala containing orderly arranged words but it represents the meaning of the words. (Arthajnana Pradhanatvat Upanishadhah). Advaita rejects the Naiyayika view that veda has origin and end. Nyaya says that Veda is created by the omniscient and omnipotent God at the time of creation and is withdrawn at the time of dissolution of the world.

Hence according to Nyaya Veda is extrinsically valid (Paratah Pramanya) being dependent upon God. But according to Advaita Veda is intrinsically valid not depending on others for its existence. It is self existent. God does not create Veda. He only issues the already existent Veda at the beginning of each world cycle. He is the first teacher of the Veda. The seers only received it thro hearing and passed it on from generation to generation. An Upanishad says, “so we have heard from our ancient seers”. Thus Veda is not connected with any person being written or spoken at any particular place and time. Samkara asks Naiyayika that if we are to accept Veda because of its omniscient creator, why do we not accept the works of other omniscients like Kanada, Kapila, Buddha etc? Are not the latter omniscients? Hence Vedas are impersonal (Aparaurushaya) according to Advaita. Except the point that Vedas relate only to duties and not to the facts all other arguments of Mimamsaka in favour of the validity of Vedas are acceptable to Advaita.

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contains injunctions which are connected with fundamental duties of mankind. The latter is confined to 'what ought to be' and is cannot be known thro reason which is confined to 'what is'. Hence the acceptance of vedic authority.

Further Veda cannot be rejected for the second reason since such statements in Veda as 'Atman is free from sorrow' is truth which other pramanas cannot contradict. Vedic statements cannot be refuted for the third reason because Veda is unambiguous about the ultimacy of Brahman. As intelligent people are able to understand the above truth, the veda cannot be charged with establishing nothing. Hence Sruti as an independent pramana must be accepted.

Reason by itself cannot establish the truth:

Samkara is emphatic on the principle that knowledge concerning Brahman is to be acquired only through the scripture. He often maintains that neither perception nor inference can reveal the Brahman. Brahman cannot be known thro perception because it has no colour and form and so it can never be an object of senses. (Rupaadi Abhavat hi nayamarthah pratyakshasya gocharah Br.Su.Bh.2-1-3)

Brahman cannot be known through syllogistic inference because it has no inferential mark as it is devoid of all internal variety and external relations with which it could have concomitance (Vyapti). (Lingadi abhavat hi nanumanadinam Br.Sut.Bh.2-1-3; Na cha anumanam….. labhate Br.Up.Bh. 2-1-20). Though we attribute this world as 'Hetu', we cannot say that Brahman itself is 'Sadhya' as we have not previously experienced the relation between Brahman and world.

Advaita criticizes Naiyayika's way of establishing truth by analogical reasoning (Samanyato drishtanumana). According to Nyaya as a fact of common experience, every object such as jar, chair has an intelligent creator. In the same way the world as a whole must have an intelligent cause. Since the world is extraordinary, its cause must also be extraordinary and that extraordinary cause is God. Against this view, Advaita has two objections. First of all, the Naiyayika's argument has limited application. The argument which holds good within the empirical framework need not be extended to extra-empirical world. That means within the empirical scheme there may be cause-effect relationship among things.But the world as a whole need not have any cause. Secondly if it is presumed that the world as a whole has a cause, the cause need not be one and it may be may be many just as a palace is constructed by many intelligent beings. Moreover it need not necessarily be created by an omnipotent and omniscient Being called God (Argument especially by Amalananda and Appayya Dikshita). Advaita further argues that Nyaya's argument can be regarded only as Yuki which gives only probable truth. Samkara does not seem to distinguish between Yuki and Anumana. But Padmapada, the author of Panchapadika distinguishes between the two. According to him the truth given by Yuki is only probable whereas the one established by Anumana is certain. However Padmapada maintains that the truth of Anumana is only empirical.

Samkara while commenting on the second Sutra (Janmadyasya yatah) of Brahma-Sutra says that conclusions of reasoning can never be uniform, since there is an endless diversity in man's power of apprehension (Kasya chit Kvachit Pakshapatye sati purushramativairupena tachcha avyavasthana prasanangat). For example, samkhya arrives at pradhana as the first cause by means of pure reason, while Naiyayikas maintain that atoms as the cause of the world. Which is to be accepted? So a thing established by mere reasoning, however well thought out, is explained otherwise by greater intellects. Hence according to Advaita no conclusion can be arrived at by mere reasoning independent of scriptures. Such a reason is only Shuska tarka or Kevala tarka. Samkara thus, 'Brahman accessible to other means of knowledge is merely a wishful thinking (Manaratha-mathrama). Mere logic can never establish the nature of Brahman. (Naisha tarkena matirapaneya, tarka apratisthanat, nayamatma pravachanena labhyah). such a logic lands oneself to skepticism. Therefore ultimate truth is ascertainable only through scriptures.

No contradiction between reason and revelation:

According to Advaita Vedanta, there is no contradiction between reason and revelation because both are intrinsically valid in their respective spheres. Reason enjoys sovereignty empirical field and Veda enjoys in its transcenempirical realm. If two pramanas are talking on the same object, only then there is the possibility of arising contradiction. But when spheres of reason and revelation are clearly demarcated, where is possibility of contradiction? (Anumanasya eva avishayatvat kutah anumana virodhah?) ‘When the object of Sruti is not the same as the object of inference, where then is the occasion for contradiction? A pramana has no authority either to establish or refute the truth of other. Just as the organ of hearing enjoys sovereignty in the kingdom of sounds and seeks no confirmation and fears no contradiction from the organ of sight, (Svavishaye shrurani hi pramanani shrotiravindrati) which enjoys sovereignty in the kingdom of forms, so too Sruti enjoys Paramountcy in transcenempirical matters. Also Sruti does not corroborate or contradict the truth accessible to perception and inference. Even hundred Shruti texts cannot make a jar a cloth. (Na vai agamah sahasrah api ghatam patayitum ishate Bhramati). If at all there is conflict between Shruti and perception on one hand and Shruthi and inference on the other, it is only due to some trespasses from the respective spheres. But actually revelation and reason are at harmony by a clear demarcation of their respective spheres of application. (Pramananan satam na nirodhah shroti iva bhinnavishayatvat-Naishkharmya Siddhi).

Sruthi has its own reason:

This however does not mean that Sruti is against reason. It adduces several rational and empirical grounds to support its purport. For instance, the famous Tatttvamasi section (6th chapter), of Chandogya Upanishad adopts upapatti in order to substantiate that the world is non-different from Brahman. It gives an analogy to substantiate its standpoint as follows: “As different objects are made out of clay are not different from clay, so too all things are created from Brahman”. In Brihadaranyaka also we see that some chapters are upapatti pradhana. Thus Sruti itself admits reason as an aid to substantiate its standpoint.
HEDONISM: A Critical Evaluation

The hedonistic theory must be abjured; for it is then no longer true that pleasure is the only desirable thing. One pleasure is, on this view, more desirable than the other, not on account of its nature as pleasure, but on account of some other quality namely that it possesses beyond its pleasurableness. Further if we admit differences of quality, it becomes impossible to place pleasures and sums of pleasure, in any precise order of distributed utility. Qualities cannot be estimated unless in some way they can be reduced to quantities. We cannot have any calculus of pleasures. Pleasures cannot be quantitatively estimated. Because they are not homogeneous. Moreover pleasure is not an entity, having an existence by itself, independently of the object in which pleasure is felt. Pleasure is inseparable from its object.

Basavaraju, R.

HEDONISM does not fall in line with psychological hedonism. There is no necessary connection between the two doctrines. The confusion that has often been made between the two theories seems to be due in part to an ambiguity in the word “desirable”. This point may be illustrated by a passage from Mill who says thus, “the only proof capable of being given that an object is visible is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible is that people hear it. …in like manner, I apprehend, the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable is that people do actually desire it”. It is here assumed that the meaning of the word “desirable” is analogous to that of “visible” and “audible”. But “visible” means “able to be seen” and “audible” means “able to be heard” whereas desirable does not usually mean “able to be desired”. When hedonism says that pleasure is the only thing that is desirable, he only means that it is the thing that ought to be desired. But the form of the word ‘desirable’ seems to have misled several writers into the notion that they ought to show also that pleasure is the only thing that is capable of being desired (the fallacy here involved that is known to writers on logic is the fallacy of figure of speech). The latter view is that of psychological hedonism, which seems clearly to be unsound. The former is that of ethical hedonism, which we have still to examine.

Hedonism is not merely theory that vaguely declares that we ought to seek pleasure. It states definitely that we ought to seek the greatest pleasure. Otherwise of course it would give us no criterion of right and wrong in conduct. Pleasure may be found by acting in the most contradictory ways. But when we are told to seek the greatest pleasure, there can usually be but one course to follow. In estimating the quantity of pleasure, it is usually said that there are two points to be taken into account namely intensity and duration. Some pleasures are preferable to others because they last longer. Point to be taken into account in this context is that we are to aim at securing the greatest sum of pleasures or the smallest sum of pains.

There is another form of hedonism namely Egoistic Hedonism. It is the doctrine that what each ought to seek is his own greatest pleasure. Cyrenaics and Epicureans held this doctrine. The writers of the former school, however, confined themselves to inculcate the pursuit of the pleasure of each moment as it passes. That means they did not take account of duration. The Epicureans, however inculcated rather the endeavour to secure the happiness of life as a whole plausibility. It is clear that the end at which we are to aim must be same end that will give us satisfaction. When asked why we pursue any end, the only reasonable answer that can be given, is that it satisfied the most fundamental demand of our nature. For if we say that we have to pursue the end for some external reason for example by the command of some superior authority, there still remains the question why we are to be influenced by that external authority. The only answer that has no further question behind it is the one that has reference only to an ultimate demand of our natural. Now when we are asked what it is that satisfied the ultimate demands of our nature, it is very natural to answer “pleasure.”

On consideration however, it appears that, in giving the above answer, we are misled by the same ambiguity as that which we encountered by dealing with psychological hedonism. It is undoubtedly true that whatever satisfies the
ultimate demands of our nature will bring pleasure with it, and may consequently be described as pleasure. But this pleasure must have an objective content and that content is not itself pleasure. The object that gives us pleasure may be the pleasure of some one else. Or it may be the welfare of our country, or it may be the fulfillment of what we conceive to be our duty. These things may also be termed pleasures. That means they are objects the attainment of which will bring us pleasures. But they are not themselves pleasures i.e. agreeable feeling. Here again to say that what we ought to seek pleasures is not to say, that we ought to seek pleasure.

There is still another form of hedonism called universalistic hedonism or Utilitarianism. The theory is so called because it, inculcates the pursuit of what is useful. This theory advocates the attainment of “the greatest happiness of the greatest number.” That means according to it, if we have to choose between greatest happiness of a small number of people and a smaller happiness of a great number of people, we ought to prefer the latter, even if the total happiness were less. Stowever the theory does not recognise that if pleasure is to be regarded as the good, we are bound to choose the greatest pleasure.

But is is now seen that pleasure is not more useful than any other possible end. The name “utilitarianism' has consequently been dropped in scientific writings though, for shortness, the term is still often used as a designation of the school.

Utilitarianism is thus the theory that what we ought to aim at is the greatest possible amount of pleasure of all human beings or of all sentiment creatures. The chief exponents of this theory are Bentham, J.S.Mill and Professor Sidgwick. Mill states that no reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person desires his own happiness. Each person's happiness is a good to that person and the general happiness, therefore is a good to the aggregate of all persons. Mill then goes on to argue that happiness is the only good. On this ground as we have already noticed, that to desire a thing and to find it pleasant are but two ways of expressing the same thing.

Objections:

We have already noticed the confusion in the last point, due to the ambiguity in the word “pleasure”. We have also noticed the confusion with regard to the meaning of “desirable” which vitiates the first part of the argument. It only remains to be noticed that the fallacy involved is that the general happiness is a good applicable to the aggregate of all persons, the fallacy which is known in logic as “the fallacy of composition.” It is inferred that because my pleasures are good to me, yours to you, his to him, so on, therefore my pleasures, your pleasures and his pleasures are good to me, you and him. It is forgotten that neither the pleasure nor the persons are capable of being made into an aggregate. It is as if to argue that since each one of 100 soldiers is 6 ft high, The whole company is 600 ft high.

There are other objections too on hedonistic theory.

The theory proceeds on the assumption that all pleasures can be quantitatively compared. That it is always possible to determine with regard to two pleasures, or two sums of pleasures, which is greater and which is the less. But according to J.S.Mill pleasures differ not merely in quantity but also in quality. That some pleasures are preferable to others not because as pleasures they are greater, but because they are of a more excellent kind. He says, “it is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact that some kinds of pleasures are more desirable and more valuable than the others. It would be absurd that while estimating all other pleasures, only quantity is considered. A person whose faculties are more highly developed is capable of higher pleasures and also of more acute suffering. The mental pleasures are superior to bodily pleasures and once a man has lived on a higher level, he can never really wish to sink to a lower level of existence. There is a saying, “It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied, better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied”.

If the above is the case, it is evident that the hedonistic theory must be abanded; for it is then no longer true that pleasure is the only desirable thing. One pleasure is, on this view, more desirable than the other, not on account of its nature as pleasure, but on account of some other quality namely that is possesses beyond its pleasuerliness. Further if we admit differences of quality, it becomes impossible to place pleasures and sums of pleasure, in any precise order of distributed utility. Qualities cannot be estimated unless in some way they can be reduced to quantities. We cannot have any calculus of pleasures. Pleasures cannot be quantitatively estimated. Because they are not homogeneous.

Moreover pleasure is not an entity, having an existence by itself, independently of the object in which pleasure is felt. Pleasure is inseperable from its object.

Reference:


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